

ERBERUS, the porter of helle, with his three hevedes, was caught and al abayst for the newe song; and the three goddesses, furies, and vengeresses of felonies, that tormenten and agasten the sowles by anoy, woxen sorwful and sory, & wepen teres for pitee. Tho ne was nat the heved of Ixion ytormented by the overthrowinge wheel; and Tantalus, that was destroyed by the woodnesse of longe thirst, despyseth the fodes to drinke; the fowl that bighte voltor, that eteth the stomak or the giser of Tityus, is so fulfild of his song that it nil eten ne tyren no more. At the laste the lord and iuge of sowles was mooved to misericordes and cryde, We ben overcomen, quod he; yive we to Orpheus his wyf to bere him companye; he hath wel ybought hir by his song and his ditee; but we wol putte a lawe in this, and covenaut in the yifte: that is to seyn, that, til he be out of helle, yif he loke behinde him, that his wyf shal comen

DE CONSOLATIONE PHILOSOPHIE. BOOK IV. PROSE I.
Hec cum Philosophia, dignitate vultus.

AN PHILOSO-
PHYE hadde song-
en softly and de-
litably the forseide
things, kepinge the
dignitee of hir chere
and the weighte of
hir wordes, I thanne,
that ne hadde nat al-
outerly foryetten the
wepinge and the mourninge that was set
in myn herte, for brak the entencioun of hir
that entendede yit to seyn some othere
things. O, quod I, thou that art gyder-
esse of verrey light; the things that thou
hast seid me hidertoben so clere to me and
so shewing by the devyne lookinge of
hem, & by thy resouns, that they ne mow-
en ben overcomen. And thilke things that
thou toldest me, albeit so that I hadde
whydom foryetten hem, for the sorwe of the
wrong that hath ben don to me, yit nathe-
les they ne weren nat aboutrely unknownen
to me. But this same is, namely, a right
greet cause of my sorwe, so as the gover-
nour of thinges is good, yif that yveles
mowen ben by any weyes; or elles yif that
yveles passen withoute punisshinge. The
whiche thing only, how worthy it is to ben
wondred upon, thou considerest it wel thy-
self certainly. But yit to this thing ther is
yit another thing yjoined, more to ben
wondred upon. for felonye is emperesse,
and flourerth ful of riches; and vertu nis
nat alonly withoute medes, but it is cast
under & fortroden under the feet of felon-

ayein unto us.

BUT what is he that may yive a lawe to
lovers? Love is a gretter lawe and a
stronger to himself than any lawe
and his wyf weren almost at the termes
of the night, that is to seyn, at the laste
ward on Eurydice his wyf, and loste hir,
and was deed.

THIS fable aperteineth to yow alle,
whosoever desireth or seketh to
lede his thought into the soverain
day, that is to seyn, the cleernesse of so-
verein good. for whoso that ever bes so over-
comen that he sicche his eye into the putte
of helle, that is to seyn, whoso sette his
thoughtes in erthely thinges, al that ever
he hath drawn of the noble good celestial,
he leseth it whan he loketh the helles, that
is to seyn, into lowe thinges of the erthe.

Explicit Liber tercius.

ous folk; and it abyeth the torments in
stede of wikkede felonies. Of alle whiche
things ther nis no wight that may mer-
veylen ynough, ne compleine, that swiche
things ben doon in the regne of God, that
alle thinges woot & alle thinges may, and
ne wole nat but only gode thinges.

THANNE seyde she thus: Certes,
quod she, that were a greet mer-
veyle, & an embasshing withouten
ende, and wel more horrible than alle mon-
stres, yif it were as thou wene; that is to
seyn, that in the right ordene hous of so
mochel a fader & an ordenour of meyne,
that the vesseles that ben foule and vyle
sholden ben honoured and heried, and the
precious vesseles sholden ben defouled &
vyle; but it nis nat so, for yif tho thinges
that I have concluded a litel herbyform ben
kept hole & unraced, thou shalt wel knowe
by the autoritee of God, of the whos
regne I speke, that certes the gode folk
ben alwey mighty, and shrewes ben alwey
outcast and feble; ne the vyces ne ben nev-
er mo withoute peyne, ne the vertues ne ben
nat withoute mede; & that blisfulnesse
comen alwey to goode folk, and infortune
comth alwey to wikked folk. And thou
shalt wel knowe many thinges of this
kinde, that shollen cesen thy pleintes, and
strengthen thee with stedefast sadnesse.
And for thou hast seyn the forme of the
verray blisfulnesse by me, that have why-
lom shewed it thee, and thou hast knownen
in whom blisfulnesse is yset, alle thinges
ytreted that I trowe ben necessarie to put-
ten forth, I shal shewe thee the wey that

shal bringen thee ayein unto thyn hous.
And I shal sicchen fetheres in thy thought,
by whiche it may aysen in heighte, so that,
alle tribulacioun ydon away, thou, by my
gydinge and by my path & by my sledes,
shalt mowe retorne hool and sound into
thy contree.

Metre I.
Sunt etenim pennae volucres mihi.

HAVE, forsothe, swifte fe-
theres that surmounten the
heighte of hevne. Whan the
swifte thought hath clothed
itself in tho fetheres, it de-
spyseth the hateful erthes,
and surmounteth the roundnesse of the
grette ayr; and it seeth the cloude behinde
his bak; and passeth the heighte of the re-
gion of the fyr, that eschaufeth by the
swifte moevinge of the firmament, til that
he aryseth him into the houses that beren
the sterres, & joyneth his weyes with the
sonne Phebus, and felawshipeth the wey
of the olde colde Saturnus; & he ymaked
a knight of the clere sterre; that is to seyn,
that the thought is maked Goddes knight
by the sekinge of trouthe to comen to the
verray knowleche of God. And thilke
thought renneth by the cercle of the sterres,
in alle places theras the shyninge night is
peinted; that is to seyn, the night that is
cloudeles; for on nightes that ben cloude-
les it semeth as the hevne were peinted
with dyverse images of sterres. And
whanne he hath ydoon ther ynough, he
shal forleten the laste hevne, and he shal
pressen & wenden on the bak of the swifte
firmament, and he shal ben maked parfit
of the worshipful light of God. Ther halt
the lord of kinges the ceptre of his might,
and atempreth the governements of the
world, and the shyninge iuge of thinges,
stable in himself, governeth the swifte
cart or wayn, that is to seyn, the circular
moevinge of the sonne. And yif thy wey
ledeth thee ayein so that thou be brought
thider, thanne wolt thou seye now that
that is the contree that thou requerest, of
which thou ne haddest no minde: But now
it remembreth me wel, heer was I born, heer
wol I faste my degree, heer wole I dwelle.
But yif thee lyketh thanne to loken on the
darknesse of the erthe that thou hast for-
leten, thanne shalt thou seen that these
felonous tyrants, that the wrecchede pe-
ple dredeth, now shollen ben exyled fro
thilke fayre contree.

Prose II.
Cum ego, Papae, inquam.

THAN seyde I thus:
Owh! I wondre me
that thou bihest
me so grete thing-
es; ne I ne doute nat
that thou ne mayst
wel performe that
thou bihest. But
I preye thee only
this, that thou ne
tarye nat to telle me thilke thinges that
thou hast moeved.

FIRST, quod she, thou most nedes
knownen, that goode folk ben alwey
stronge & mighty, & the shrewes
ben feble and desert and naked of alle
strengthes. And of these thinges, certes,
everich of hem is declared and shewed by
other. for so as good and yvel ben two
contraries, yif so be that good be stede-
fast, than sheweth the feblesse of yvel al
openly; & yif thou knowe cleerly the feble-
nesse of yvel, the stedefastnesse of good
is knownen. But for as moche as the fey of
my sentence shal be the more ferme and
haboundaunt, I will gon by that oo wey
and by that other; and I wole conferme the
thinges that ben purposed, now on this
syde and now on that syde. Two thinges
ther ben in whiche the effect of alle the
dedes of mankinde standeth, that is to
seyn, wil and power; and yif that oon of
these two fayleth, ther nis nothing that
may be don. for yif that wil lakketh, ther
nis no wight that undertaketh to don that
he wol nat don; and yif power fayleth, the
wil nis but in ydel and stant for naught.
And therof cometh it, that yif thou see a
wight that wolde geten that he may nat
geten, thou mayst nat doute that power
ne fayleth him to haven that he wolde.
This is open and cleer, quod I; ne it may
nat ben denyed in no manere. And yif
thou see a wight, quod she, that hath doon
that he wolde doon, thou nilt nat doute
that he ne hath had power to don it? No,
quod I. And in that that every wight may,
in that men may holden him mighty; as who
seyth, in so moche as man is mighty to don
a thing, in so moche men halt him mighty;
and in that that he ne may, in that men de-
men him to be feble. I confesse it wel,
quod I. Remembreth thee, quod she,
that I have gadered & shewed by forseyde
resouns that al the entencioun of the wil
of mankinde, which that is lad by dyverse
studies, hasteth to comen to blisfulnesse?
It remembreth me wel, quod I, that it
hath ben shewed. And recordeth thee
nat thanne, quod she, that blisfulnesse is
thilke same good that men requeren; so

Boethius de
Consolatione
Philosophie.
Book IV.